

***VetsBuild is a new green job training program for returning veterans***

Bay Shore, NY – On Monday, Rep Steve Israel (D-Huntington) joined Theresa Regnante, CEO of United Way Long Island, Frank Amalfitano, president and CEO of United Veterans Beacon House, and Bob Isaksen, Bank of America Long Island president, to announce a \$100,000 Bank of America grant for a new program to provide green job training for veterans. VetsBuild will be a spinoff of United Way's successful YouthBuild Program. With U.S. troops returning from Iraq, the program will help veterans transition to green jobs.

"No veteran should spend Christmas without a home or a job. With the end of the war in Iraq and the return of our troops, we need to do all we can to help our service members transition back home and into good jobs. Between 2011 and 2016, more than one million service members are projected to leave the military but the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans remains higher than the national average," said Rep. Israel. "VetsBuild will counsel veterans and provide green jobs training so we can put the men and women who fought for us on a path to success. I applaud United Veterans Beacon House, the United Way Long Island and Bank of America for partnering on this important program."

The \$100,000 grant will go to United Veterans Beacon House who will work with United Way to launch and administer the program. United Veterans Beacon House, located in Bay Shore, will recruit veterans for the program and offer counseling and treatment for various mental health concerns. United Way Long Island, which currently oversees the model program YouthBuild, will offer job training, career building and networking opportunities focused on the expanding energy efficiency and alternative energy industries.

"To my knowledge there is no other program of this nature offered on Long Island, free of charge, for veterans. United Veterans Beacon House is proud to be part of this ground-breaking training for Long Island veterans," said Amalfitano.

"United Way of Long Island is incredibly grateful to Bank of America for supporting the VetsBuild

initiative. This will be a Bank of America signature program that will mobilize veterans to improve the regional economy in the high growth, high demand green construction industry. We are thankful to Bank of America – as the key investor of this program – which will connect veterans to training opportunities, skilled educational experiences and supportive wrap-around services, which are all fundamental to creating family-sustaining income. We look forward to working with United Veterans Beacon House and Bank of America to create positive outcomes for this program,” United Way’s Regnante said.

“The VetsBuild program will offer critical support to Long Island veterans returning to civilian life, many of whom struggle with that adjustment,” said Bank of America’s Isaksen. “This grant is a reflection of our commitment to the brave men and women who have served our country.”

In November, the unemployment rate for veterans was 7.4 percent and 11.1 percent for those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. A June 2011 report from the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee ranked New York as the 10th worst state in the nation for unemployed post-9/11 veterans. The report highlighted how the May 2011 New York state unemployment rate was 7.9% but the unemployment rate in New York for 9/11 veterans was twice as high at 15.2%.

Rep. Israel has long advocated on behalf of Long Island veterans and has secured more than \$4.9 million in overdue payments for veterans in New York’s Second Congressional District.